

Ribbon Cutting Ceremony – Southern Maine Re-Entry Center

ALFRED – On July 25, York County publicly opened its arms to the new Southern Maine Re-Entry Center and the Maine Department of Corrections; officially announcing that the facility is open and ready to begin changing lives.

“We have a great opportunity right now within the Department of Corrections to enhance the programming that we currently have for women. Working with York County has given us an opportunity to expand those programs, working with the community in terms of employment and skill building. I think it will be a great partnership and we’re really looking forward to what the county and the community have to offer us,” said Amanda Woolford, who is the director of female services of the Department of Corrections.

The previously vacant building on Layman Way, across from the York County Jail, has been repurposed and revitalized to house up to 64 female offenders of the state of Maine, with less than three years left on their sentences. The Maine Department of Corrections is renting the facility from York County and is responsible for approximately \$180,000 worth of repairs into the building. The current female residents have also worked tirelessly to beautify their new home with fresh paint and beautiful landscaping.

“This is a good example of the county and the state working together. It really will change the lives of these offenders as they enter back into the community,” said Commissioner Joseph Ponte of the Maine Department of Corrections.

Over the course of their five-year lease, the state will pay \$350,000 to York County government. The increased revenue from this partnership will help to fund several new programs and future initiatives of the county; programs like offering information technology assistance to towns located within the county, as well as issuing prescription discount cards to York County residents.

“This partnership truly speaks to the nature of York County, our history, and the resourcefulness of our community. To preserve existing buildings and to find innovative ways to revitalize them, exemplify our strengths,” stated County Commissioner David Bowles.

This partnership has not only created a new life and a new purpose for this previously vacant building; it has also helped to create a healthy environment for the women housed at the re-entry center, to reintegrate into society and to give them a fresh start.